

10/20/2023

The Omen Issue 59.3



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kern bardcore hours

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Staff Box: (In order of appearance)

Max: To play girlsgogames w/ the koopa kids

Mia: To peg Bowser

Papa Mugz: To find enlightenment

Jay: Treason

Nic: To get to the other side

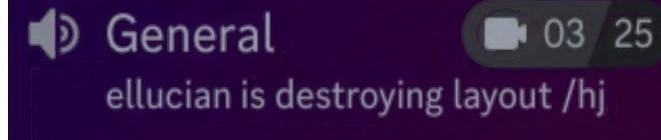
Violet: Mario got into QAnon

willow: eternal return

Jordan: She's having a secret affair

Dylan: To gaslight Mario

Lin: *** * goop**



Front & Back Cover: Mia Sanghvi

Submissions are due always, constantly, so submit forever. You can submit in any format (no PDFs please) by CD, Flash Drive, singing telegram, carrier pigeon, paper airplane, Fed-Ex, Pony Express, or email. Get your submissions to omen@hampshire.edu, the Omen Office, Mia's mailbox (1084), Willow's mailbox (1265), or Max's mailbox (0509).

Policy

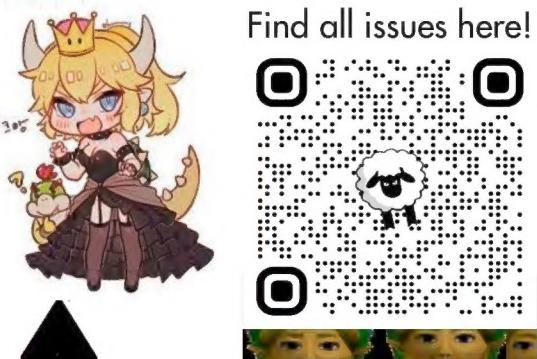
The Omen is an every-other-week-ly publication that is the world's only example of the consistent application of a straightforward policy: we publish all signed submissions from members of the Hampshire community that break neither the law nor the Hampshire College Student Handbook. Send your impassioned yet poorly-thought-out rants, self-insertion fanfiction, MS Paint comics, and whiny emo poetry to omen@hampshire.edu; we'll publish it all, and we're happy to do it. The Omen is about giving you a voice, no matter how little you deserve it. Since its founding in December of 1992 by Stephanie Cole, the Omen has hardly ever missed an issue, making it Hampshire's longest-running publication.

Your Omen submission (you're submitting right now, right?) might not be edited, and we can't promise any spellchecking either, so any horrendous mistakes are your fault, not ours. We do promise not to insert comical spelling mistakes in submissions to make you look foolish.

Your submission must include the name you use around campus: an open forum comes with a responsibility to take ownership of your views. Views expressed in the Omen do not necessarily reflect the views of the Omen editor, the Omen staff, or anyone, anywhere, living or dead.

The Omen staff consists of whoever shows up for Omen layout, which take place every other Friday at 7:00 p.m. in the basement of Merrill A. You should come and answer the staff box question. We don't bite. You can find the Omen every other Monday in Saga, the post office, online at expelallo.men, and just about any other place we can find to put it.

Find all issues here!



Views in the Omen (5)

Do not necessarily (7)

Reflect the staff's views (5)





EDITORIAL



Nerds R Us

by Willow and Mia

Mia :)

I would consider myself a long-term nerd, starting my nerd journey as a wee lass. I'm interested in a lot of things, namely video games, anime, TTRPGs, Bollywood, and Luke's breasts. I believe I can attribute the start of my nerd transformation to my mother, who I can also attribute the start of my mental illnesses to, funnily enough (don't worry about it). We would watch movies/shows/anime and play pixelated Sega Genesis games displayed on our old CRT Television, y'know one of those big box looking ones. One of my favorite shows we'd watch was an anime called *Candy Candy*, which is now, like it was then, illegal to watch. There was a whole copyright dispute that made it against the law to watch anywhere, but South Americans didn't care I guess??? So we had this Spanish version of the entire show that who knows where my mother got lol. I'll probably write something else about this piece of seemingly lost media another time, but *Candy Candy* is a shoujo about the life of a orphan girl and she might've had a reverse-harem??? It's been a while since I've last seen it. Of the games we'd play on our Genesis console the ones I remember were some Sonic game (I forgot which), The Ooze, Echo the Dolphin, and Tetris. I'm not good at any of them, but it definitely sparked my interest in games of the digital variety. Not too long after I got my hands on a copy of Minecraft. And oh boy, did that change everything! I probably would have had a very different life if I never played that sandbox game. But here I am now, writing this silly little thing for an even sillier* publication. And I'm enjoying every moment of it!

* /positive

willow-

there are lots of potentially nerdy things i have loved in my life without being a nerd about them - the distinction, as i see it, being that despite my appreciation i have remained apart from the culture & the obsession of fandom that crosses the line into nerdiness. that being said, i am certainly not above the sort of disproportionate attachment that comes with fandom, & there have been several shows, games, books, & comics in my past which i would fully acknowledge a nerdy enthusiasm for. why admit to such a thing in a public forum like the Omen, you may ask? the answer is two-pronged: first, of course, is that nerdiness is no longer seen as inherently negative, especially here at hampshire; more compelling, however, is that by sharing my obsessions i could potentially convince others to be interested in the fandoms i have been involved with over time.

the first thing i was ever really a nerd about was a short series of comics i made in kindergarten about a ghost named booey. he was five years old, had a spiky wrecking ball attached to his head, & had adventures fighting villains like “fireball” & “rotton egg.” i knew booey’s deep lore inside & out, & expanded that awareness, too, when my brother started his own series with a very similar ghost named wooey. we would roleplay as our characters & go back & forth telling each other stories about them line by line, & i grew deeply attached to what we had made in a way that would not happen again for years. it wasn’t until i started using the internet that i could come to know a fandom so intimately again, & when it finally happened again i fell hard instead for steven universe. the culture around it was obviously very different, but i loved the in-jokes among fans of the series & the way that people took it & made it their own. between the show’s many hiatuses, i became invested in people’s original characters & fusions that gave me hope about where the story would go, & i even got my first social media app (amino) solely for the purpose of connecting with other steven universe fans. the show, just like the comics i had made before, was among my first experiences of becoming nerdier by sharing my enthusiasm with others, & so both were crucial to my growth as a nerd.

harry potter & terraria, on the other hand, i became a nerd about almost on my own. the first captured my imagination with its myriad memorable characters & its plot that built up so wonderfully throughout the books, while terraria had an odd sense of humor & attention to detail that lent it to deep scrutiny & fanatic enthusiasm. good content for either fandom was hard to find for me especially before i had independent access to the internet, so while i became obsessively interested in them i had no one to share them with aside from my brother. more frustratingly, neither did i have any good way to engage with them aside from building up an encyclopedic knowledge about both by obsessively rereading/replaying & researching both, eventually even scouring wiki pages for trivia once i felt like i was stagnating. both harry potter & terraria became deeply ingrained in me, to the point where their worlds & internal logic felt fully fleshed-out to me, & rather than making them my own creatively as with booey & su i was content to internalize them by simply memorizing everything about them & holding them in my head in their entirety. this was a different approach to nerdiness, but it was every bit as important to shaping who i was as a fan & a nerd, & it helped both to stick around in my mind for long after i remained obsessed with them.

this brings me to the last section of my journey as a nerd, which involves the fandoms that really shaped who i was creatively & inspired me to grow as a person. while every one of my interests became part of me in one way or another, only a few felt like they were perfectly in tune with the direction i was moving in at the time, & the two of those most worth mentioning are undertale & one piece. stylistically, both are rough & unpolished, but once i got into them any flaws they had fell away for me. both seem like perfect realizations in many regards of the ideals, worldviews, humor, art sensibilities, & creative voice i would most want to express myself, & they have become intrinsically tied to how i see myself since discovering them. unfortunately, this also makes it even more frustrating than normal to have difficulty sharing them with other people, & i can only wait until my friends warm up to the idea of trying them out & spare me the agony of keeping them to myself!!

SECTION SPEAK

IT Letter by Eliot Troop

Hi! I think this is how to get stuff into the omen, so here is the letter I wrote and sent to Ed Wingenbach about the IT outsourcing back in July. With the protest today, I figured I'd make it public since he didn't respond to my email.

Thank you!!!

Eliot

Dear President Ed Wingenbach and Hampshire College Board of Trustees,

I am writing to you with frustration and confusion about your decision to sign a contract with Ellucian, the company chosen to replace Hampshire's IT department. One of the main reasons I chose to apply early decision to Hampshire was its seemingly tight knit community and respect for its students. I loved the idea of being involved with the college on a higher level than just being a customer. I also chose Hampshire for the freedom to build my own curriculum and explore many different ways of learning. I came in with a strong interest in computer science and technology. During my first semester, there were no computer science courses, but I was overjoyed to see "Intro to CS" in the course list for S23. Unfortunately, I was unable to attend for medical reasons. One of my other joys was getting a position at the student IT helpdesk. I got to use my skills to help real people with real problems, and to me, that's what Hampshire was all about.

This decision goes against everything I thought Hampshire was. It was made with no input from the community, with no respect for its students, and with no care for the students who directly benefit from hands-

on experience with the IT department.

Back in June, a petition was created on [Change.org](#). The petition has 1,089 signatures at the time of sending this letter. This decision directly goes against the wishes of almost 1,100 students, alumni, and even faculty members.

One of the major benefits of having a local IT department is that student data is safer. The larger a company is, the more bad actors or malicious programs target it. Hampshire on its own is minuscule compared to the “[over 2,500 institutions](#)” under Ellucian’s umbrella. Ellucian even suffered a data breach [not even four years ago](#). By going through with this decision, Hampshire goes from being a blip on the map to a potential casualty in the war of data security.

While most students may not be functionally affected by the change, there is a small but growing population of students attending for computer science. Taking away opportunities to work with professionals directly and negatively impacts our college experience.

I understand that maintaining the IT infrastructure of the college is likely expensive, and that moving services to a third party reduces that expense, but I do not believe that it is worth compromising the integrity and transparency of Hampshire College. I hope you will reverse this decision, and that you will be more accepting of community feedback in the future.

Sincerely,

Eliot Troop (F22, 07/13/2023)



Counterproductive Stocking Practices at the Hampstore

by Blaise Paine

As someone who goes to the Hampstore with alarming frequency because Going to the Store and Shopping are still novel and exciting things for me, I have noticed a practice that doesn't really make a lot of sense to me: items like pregnancy tests, condoms and other contraceptives, menstrual products, these are all stocked on inaccessible shelves behind the counter.

As much as we would all love for these to be socially-neutral items, they aren't. We don't immediately shed all our culturally ingrained shame and fear because our school promotes safer sex and harm reduction. I personally know several students who would be uncomfortable asking a cashier, no matter how friendly, for these items. And that's one more unnecessary barrier between the students and accessing important things like contraceptives, menstrual products, and pregnancy tests. Bringing an item to a cashier to purchase is much easier than asking for it out loud.

As far as I can tell, there is no provision in any applicable law requiring any of these items to be held behind the counter. I suspect, instead, it's simply a matter of unquestioned convention, or perhaps a lack of shelf space.

Regardless, I think it would be beneficial, and fairly easy, to rearrange shelving in the Hampstore to provide more immediate and easy access to potentially embarrassing but vitally important products.

Thank you for your time,

Blaise Paine

(they/she)

bfp23@hampshire.edu



Fright Night Hosted by UMOJA The Black Student Union by Xavriela Valdez



The Us In Between: a Poetry Open Mic @ The Art Gallery

by Nebraska Chatham

THE US IN BETWEEN OPEN MIC @ THE ART GALLERY



Nathan
McClain

Hosted
By

Nebraska
Chatham



Bring your poems, spoken word, jokes, and other written art- or just come and listen!

**NOVEMBER 8TH AT 6PM
HAMPSHIRE ART GALLERY**

- Open to students, staff and faculty
- Food and drinks provided
- Free admission
- Wanna read something?

Register
here!

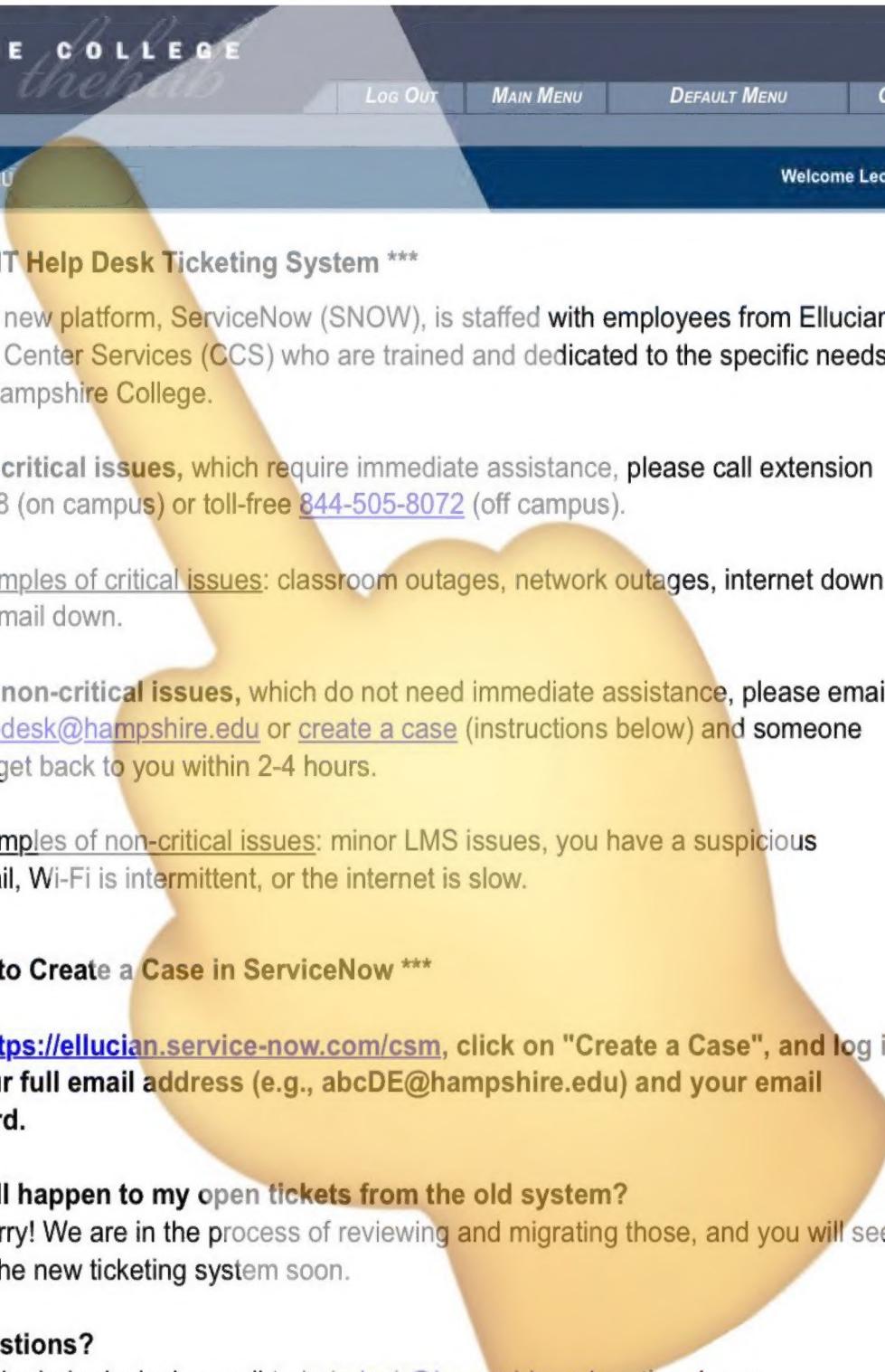


Generously sponsored by the Time & Narrative LC



rage

by Leo Zhang



HAMPSHIRE COLLEGE *thehub*

LOG OUT MAIN MENU DEFAULT MENU CONTACT US

STUDENTS MENU Welcome Leo (2391362)!

***** New IT Help Desk Ticketing System *****

The new platform, ServiceNow (SNOW), is staffed with employees from Ellucian Call Center Services (CCS) who are trained and dedicated to the specific needs of Hampshire College.

For critical issues, which require immediate assistance, please call extension 5418 (on campus) or toll-free [844-505-8072](tel:844-505-8072) (off campus).

Examples of critical issues: classroom outages, network outages, internet down, or email down.

For non-critical issues, which do not need immediate assistance, please email helpdesk@hampshire.edu or [create a case](#) (instructions below) and someone will get back to you within 2-4 hours.

Examples of non-critical issues: minor LMS issues, you have a suspicious email, Wi-Fi is intermittent, or the internet is slow.

***** How to Create a Case in ServiceNow *****

Go to <https://ellucian.service-now.com/csm>, click on "Create a Case", and log in with your full email address (e.g., abcDE@hampshire.edu) and your email password.

What will happen to my open tickets from the old system?
Don't worry! We are in the process of reviewing and migrating those, and you will see them in the new ticketing system soon.

Any questions?
Contact the help desk via email to helpdesk@hampshire.edu or by phone ([413.559.5418](tel:413.559.5418)).



Wifi at 10:45 at night:

Wi-Fi

eduroam

Me at 10:45 at night:



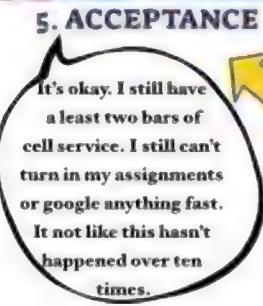
1. DENIAL



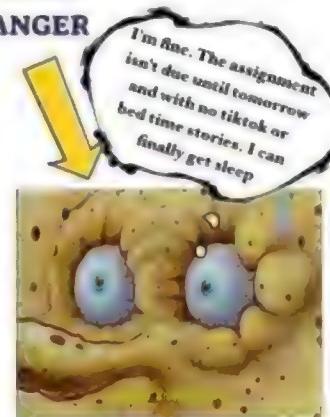
2. ANGER



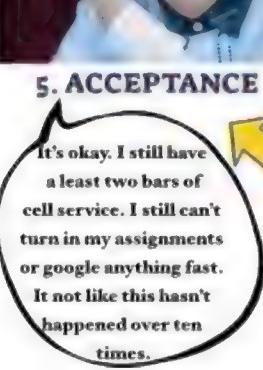
STAGES OF GRIEF



4. DEPRESSION



3. BARGAINING



5. ACCEPTANCE

The Five Stages of Eduroam WiFi Grief, by Ellen Benedict



SECTION LIES

CONTENT WARNING FOR SUBMISSION ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE: BRIEF DESCRIPTIONS OF GORE

Heartworm

by Nicholas Utakis-Smith

It all began with a single worm that I found in my grandparents backyard. I was visiting them over summer break and they paid me 5 dollars to go dig up the weeds. It was as I pulled out the roots with my trowel that my eye caught flickering movement in the dirt. Rather than crawl back into the dirt, as I might have expected, the worm crawled out of the hole. Then, it seemed as though everything I saw in front of me was being painted over outwards from the hole with a worm-shaped brush. It seemed as though the worm had somehow burrowed its way into everything I could see. I became certain in that moment that if I were to put a microscope to any of what I saw in that backyard, I would see millions of tiny worms making up the matter present. Was I delirious? Was I having some weird reaction to some chemical in the garden? I gave up on my 5 dollars, and went back indoors to take some painkillers.

My grandparents had two guest rooms in their house, one that I was staying in, and one that my parents were staying in. My parents had the most storage space in their room, so all the medication was stored in their closet. Holding a glass of water I brought to drink with the pills, I knocked on the door to their guest room.

No response.

A shot of pain went through my head, so intense that it made my vision go blurry. I yanked on the doorknob and barged my way in. As my vision cleared, I saw my parents on the bed, sitting upright, faces pressed into each other, lips together. A sight that I'd usually tried to look away from, but that I'd seen enough times to be used to. It took me a second to spot the new element. Each of their naked chests had, on the left hand side, a large hole from which a large worm had emerged. The worms in each of their chests had knotted together, the ends of the invertebrate creatures pressed together and intertwining. I walked toward the drawer that held the painkillers in it and grabbed the bottle, before running out of the room, slamming the door behind me, getting out of there as quickly as possible.

I had no time to consider what that was that I saw in that room, as immediately afterwards I saw my father coming out of that room, finishing putting his shirt on as he walked.

“You alright, kid? You looked kind of out of it there.”

I washed the pills down with the water in my glass. “I got a huge headache all of a sudden after seeing this worm in the garden.”

“Heh, maybe it’s a sign. I guess we should have left the medicine out somewhere where you can get it without disrupting your mom and I’s private time.” he said.

“What the hell were you doing in there anyway?” I said. My headache was already starting to clear, as was my embarrassment at barging into a situation like that, and I needed to know why my parents had worms coming out of their chests.

“Let’s go to your guest room. Somewhere where your mother won’t hear me giving you the talk.” My dad pulled my hand along and led me to my own bed, where he sat me down.

“Teens around your age usually start to notice certain...biological needs...that they didn’t have before. Usually, we don’t talk about these needs, because they can be a little superficially gross. But once you’re familiar with the process, satisfying these needs can be a beautiful thing.”

As he said this, my father pulled out his wallet and began to search around in it for a picture. He pulled out a photograph that appeared to be of a tank of water with what looked like a wet, fleshy rope inside of it. He said, “When I was your age, my father introduced me to this beautiful creature. You see, people might be able to survive on their own, but they aren’t supposed to. Ever since my partner here,” which he accompanied with a gesture towards the left hand side of his chest, “started living with me, I’ve been an infinitely happier man.”

“So you have a worm living inside your chest?”

“Every adult does. I’ve enjoyed life infinitely more because I got to experience it together with my worm.”

He looked at me, and seeing my confusion and horror said, “Look, I’m not the best at explaining things. What say I take you in person to look for a partner tomorrow?”

“Weren’t we supposed to visit the mall tomorrow?”

“I mean we were, but this is much more important. You’ll look back on this day as the most important day in your life.”

I went to bed, and again, the worm visited me in my dreams. I was floating along through the sky, and along the ground, the worm was burrowing, following me. Or rather, I was following it. It was carving a trail through the earth, and all I could do was float along bearing witness to it.

I was dragged along by my father to the bus stop, and then a transfer to the train. I could swear along the way that I saw a few peoples’ chests wriggle and squirm under their shirts. I watched a couple of young adults press up against each other in their seats on the train, and unbutton their shirts, forming a tent underneath their shirts under which something moved. Eventually, we arrived at the train station, and walked to a store with large worms crawling along in the display window.

We went inside, and passed by probably hundreds of glass cages filled with worms each roughly the size of a small dog. There was one that banged its face into the glass, startling me. It was staring at me, and I thought that it seemed hungry, like it had spotted me in particular as a meal it wanted. My dad saw me staring and commented “Oh, that one’s a real looker.” He called out to one of the store workers, who came by and grabbed the glass cage off the shelf. Before I knew it, my dad and the worker had pulled me into a private room, and unbuttoned my shirt at the top, pulling the fabric aside to reveal part of my bare chest. The worm in the glass cage was frenzied, smacking itself against the glass so hard cracks had begun to spread. My father brought the cage up to my chest, and opened the lid on top. The worm slithered out, and crawled into my chest. I suddenly found that trying to breathe felt overwhelmingly complicated, and that was the last thing I remembered at the store.

I dreamed that I was sitting on a park bench, checking my watch. I knew that someone was coming to meet me on this bench, so I was checking my watch every few minutes. It was just coming to the time when we were supposed to be meeting up when I saw the earth in front of me start to move. The dirt and grass parted as a fleshy bulge emerged from the hole being made. Out of the hole rose the worm, human-sized this time, and it stood up like a person and sat down on the bench next to me. We sat next to each other in tranquil silence for a few minutes. We might not have said anything to each other, but we felt the same grass around our toes and the same sun on our faces. Then the worm towards me, and opened its mouth wide. The mouth stretched, forming a tent around me, and the sky darkened around me as I was enveloped whole.

I woke up, feeling like my lungs were being pumped faster and faster no matter how much I wanted to slow down. My bedsheets were soaked with my sweat. I peeled them off of me, and looked down at my body in front of me. The part of my chest where my heart would be was instead a hole, with the worm coiled up inside of it. I tried my best not to think about it, and I put a shirt on to cover it up. I glanced at my alarm clock as I got the shirt over my head, and I happened to have woken up around the time we'd usually be having dinner as a family. I headed out to the kitchen, where my parents were sitting down to eat.

“Guess who finally decided to wake up.” my mother said.

I didn’t respond. I didn’t have the energy. I just scooped some pasta onto my plate and started to eat. It was then that I felt a tug in my chest. I ignored it at first, but as I ate the tug felt stronger. It was the worm, pulling itself toward my plate, hungering for it. I felt overwhelmed and overstimulated by the signals. I must have looked like shit, because my father looked at me and said “You should give your partner some food.” I wanted to protest, but I also wanted the tugging to stop. I grabbed a spoonful of pasta and held it up to my chest, and then pulled down the shoulder of my shirt. The worm lunged forward, engulfing the spoon, and disappeared just as quickly. The tugging stopped. My spoon was covered in this scummy slime. I excused myself and went to go wash it, but instead of coming back to the table I just went back to my room.

This continued on for the next several nights at my grandparents house. I would be eating and I’d feel a tug, and the tug would gradually get worse and worse as I ate. I’d eventually give in and feed the worm, wash my spoon, and lose my appetite. As I started to get used to it, I’d begin to feed the worm as soon as I felt a tug.

I'd bring two spoons to the table, one for the worm, and one for myself. I'd enjoy the peace I got after the worm had been sated. It wasn't so much that I'd come to mind the situation less, but more that I'd come to accept the reality and learn to work around it.

It was a few days after this that the tugging began to happen outside of dinner time. I would be minding my own business, reading a graphic novel I had taken out from the library back home and brought up with me to my grandparents house. Then I began to feel the tugging again. I went to the kitchen and grabbed some leftovers, and held them up to the worm. It wasn't interested. The door to leave the house was right next to us, and I felt the tugging pulling me in that direction. I went outside, and felt myself tugged towards the ground. I lowered myself down as long as the tugging kept continuing. I was laying down on the floor when I felt it stop. I felt the worm pull and extend out of my chest into the ground, burrowing through. The worm was still connected to me, but it was also burrowing through the ground, so I was stuck there, face to the ground, until the worm coiled back into my chest. Then it was over.

This too repeated for the next several days. I would feel the tugging towards the door, I would go outside into the yard, and I would be pulled to the ground for what felt like several minutes, and then it would be done. When I got back home, though, things began to change. My grandparents had their own front and back yards, but back home we lived in an apartment. The day after we got back, when I stepped outside to give it access to the ground I felt headaches like when I first encountered the worm, and I ran, head in my hands, into the park. I lowered myself to the ground, and felt the tugging subside as the worm pulled itself through the dirt. As I rose up from the ground, I saw a few others around me plastered to the dirt, performing the same ritual I did. With this, the worm learned how to get to the park, the tugging becoming more gentle and leading me in the park's direction every day.

This wasn't without an impact on my schedule. The food sharing was fine, it happened during dinner time anyway, but the dirt ritual usually happened a little before 10:30am, and took a good half hour out of my day. I ended up scheduling my life around this, and it meant less times when I was available to meet up with my friends. They grilled me pretty harshly on this over the phone, given I hadn't told them what it was that kept me busy in the morning.

I sort of took pride in being able to adapt to the worm's needs. It was exhausting, it was frustrating, it was lonely, but handling it made me feel strong. Eventually, though, it began to wear me down.

I tried to tell my father how much the tugging was hurting and he just said “That’s just one of the things you have to deal with in a relationship like this.” I eventually told one of my friends the situation over the phone. They responded to almost everything I said with a “What!?” or a “Ex-cuse me!??”, and it reminded me that this wasn’t normal, no matter how much I was used to it, or how much my parents said otherwise. I felt my heart beat, muffled by the worm’s body, with renewed fear.

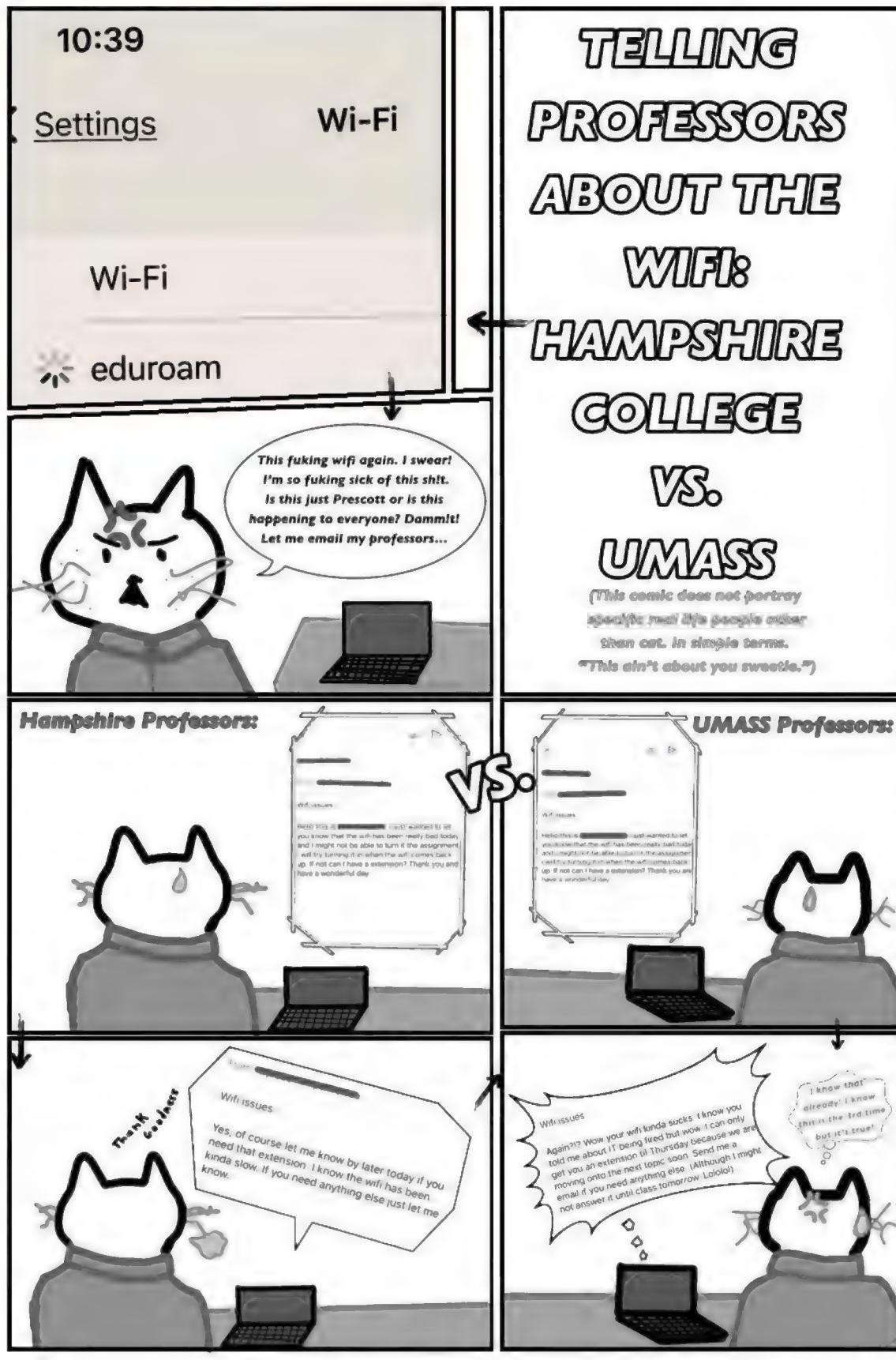
Next morning, around 9 am, I grabbed a large chef’s knife from the kitchen and put it in my sweater pocket. I also held on to the first aid kit in the bathroom. Around 10:30, I felt the tug to go outside, and I dutifully followed the worm to the park. I placed myself on the ground, and waited until the worm had fully burrowed in. Then, I felt around with my knife and pulled into the flesh coming out of my chest. The worm’s flesh came loose, and I pulled myself off the ground. A bloody mass of flesh was burrowed into the ground below me. On my own end, the bleeding wouldn’t stop. I tried to apply gauze and bandages from the first aid kit, and though it was a very large wound, eventually I was able to get it covered. Covered, however, did not mean healthy. I felt, on the left side of my chest, where my heart should be, an empty void. There was no thumping, no beating, just the tail end of the worm. When it left my body, it took my heart with it. That was the last thing I remember before falling back into a dream.



now featuring by Violet Gibson

i am honored and in awe
 a face of a monument, remarkably coasting down the bridge of your nose
 and resting on the weary smile, the very bottom of the canyon of your features
 that i could fill with my forlorning
 i want to fight to stay alive with you
 and i want to need
 your eyelashes are the only thing featured in my subconscious, thoughtless from time
 as gentle as a dimly lit cavern, eroded from our getting-to-know-each-other
 i ramble about you to anyone who will listen, the main feature of my undeterred conversation
 i lie in the dark and picture my ring finger disconnected from my body (cut off, entirely separate)
 i sigh
 for the reasons i will never do, or say, or allow myself to think anything are
 feature-length





The Oracle is Gone

A Short Story by Prisca Afantchao

André saw it coming. He didn't hear a voice but he felt it hang in the air. He felt it in the petrichor. That day they didn't take their bikes out because it had been pouring for hours. There wouldn't be much more sun, even after the rain stopped. There were only 7 days left, for the entire world. Birds had been hurling themselves at windows, engines had been inexplicably exploding, there was a fire in the school cafeteria the week before, things were disappearing out of thin air. He told them what had been revealed to him - that they were running out of time. They met in the back field where the soccer and cross country teams used to practice. It was empty but they still spoke in hushed tones.

"It's happening now. We have until Sunday... at midnight. Before the sky spills." André cut to the chase.

"Did The Oracle tell you?" Mickey asked, staring at his muddy sneakers. "The Oracle is gone. I heard it... in the air yesterday." André stared at his own. "Where's the Oracle?" Josh looked to André with sad eyes, welling up.

"Rotting under the tree at the bus stop." André looked up at them now.

"So, what do we do now?" Will muttered.

"We try to survive."

"We build?"

"In the woods."

"In the woods..." Josh echoed "and what about everyone else?"

"There is no one else, not past Sunday." André whispered.

So they met before and after school every day that week. They raced out of the house, too early, too late, and congregated in the woods behind that old field, past the tired, abandoned football equipment and fading spray painted lines. They built a structure out of what they could find - scrap metal, branches, wood from strangers' yards, tarps, and nailed it together until they made what resembled a fortress. They hoped it could stand the storm. At times they found it difficult to keep their knowledge to themselves. They wanted to save some, spite others. When Stevie Anders, that rotten 8th grader, pushed Josh into his locker, he only scoffed. When Mickey's mother yelled at him for not folding his laundry he didn't complain. When Will woke up on Friday all he could do was cry. André couldn't even sleep. He sat up in bed, as still as he could be, listening for whispers in the night, for murmurs from The Oracle, or what was left of him. They visited The Oracle that Saturday morning and watched him go, the once fiery fur now mangey and damp, his tail limp. The Oracle had always been around - at the next corner, behind hedges, running past garden walls, revealing ancient truths and affirming

new ones, watching over them as they explored their microscopic world - The Oracle was life and death on four swift legs. He was what some would call rabid, but he never bit.

"He's saying it's up to us." André knelt on the mossy ground before the great tree while the rest stood back.

"To act?" Will took a step closer.

"Yes, to act, and listen, and understand."

The sky was clear but did not phase them. Soon it would break open but for now it bled internally. That last day, they all wore their best church clothes. Polyester clip-on ties and Payless loafers. Each of them wore black to mourn the death of The Oracle and, of course, everything else. On their last day here, on Earth as they thought they knew it, the four of them sat on the crooked, rusting bench on the old football field, staring out into the dense woods wrapping around them. There was absolutely no sign of rain and no warnings on the news, but they knew. They rode their bikes together, like always, up and down the same streets. Will and Mickey doing tricks, Josh trying and failing, having even more trouble than usual with his dress shoes on, and André just watching. The roads were eerily empty, too still, and the Earth beneath their feet was unassuming. The sun began to set, an unnatural, burning orange. Oh, how it already hurt.

"I love you all." André called out before they parted ways on the corner of Plymouth Road and Park Avenue.

"I know." Josh smiled meekly.

"I mean it. More than anything I've said before." André continued.

"Even if we don't make it - even if we don't have The Oracle to tell us what to do, we'll be fine." Will nodded.

"Even if we die?" Mickey asked, his voice thick with apprehension.

"Even then."

They each arrived at the fortress on time, according to their plans but not the weather. It was early, the rain. They pushed through the sheets of rain for blocks, their raincoats no match for the elements. Arriving at the fortress, now toppled down, completely wrecked, they panicked.

"What do we do now?" Mickey cried out over the racket.

"We only have two minutes, André." Josh's voice shook, straining to be heard through the storm. "What do we do? What's gonna happen now?" Will looked up at the canopy of the woods. "Nobody knows... nobody knows." André said, not even hearing his own voice.

He fell to the ground, hugging his knees to his chest and waiting for what they didn't know. They joined him, retreating into themselves as the rain only got worse. They held sweaty hands, hid tear stained faces in each other's embraces, and everyone but André closed their eyes. He watched the trees shudder and lightning crackle in the distance. Two blinding, beaming white lights met his solemn eyes, and he didn't turn away. They grew nearer as something quicker, heavier, yet more tame than The Oracle, something that could kill The Oracle in one second, closed in on them. He heard no booming voice, only felt the crunching of leaves, the electricity above him, and the weight of his friends on his body. Thus, he felt the weight of the world on his body and didn't care what was behind those lights, what held them, where they were headed, or why.



Top ten things I have put in my mouth (this week!)

By and for Lucas Brisbois

Ten: doorknob. I love delicious hand bacteria. One of the top three foods.

Nine: sea salt. I just let this one sit on the tongue. Really simmer into the tastebuds. Unique feeling. Very New England.

Eight: a globe. Alright someone had to consume New Guinea. Far as I'm concerned I'm a hero.

Seven: nutritional yeast. The lifesaver of any meal. Put it on your popcorn. Put it on your nachos. Hell, put it in your hand and feed it to your friend like you were feeding a horse grain.

Six: machete. No, not the object Jason Voorhees uses to brutalize horny teenagers. I'm talking about the major motion picture starring Danny Trejo.

Five: deodorant. Finding the right flavor of deodorant is like finding a perfectly aged glass of wine.

Four: Ken. Hi Ken! If you're reading this you should probably tell your mother about us.

Three: retainer. It is important to keep your teeth in place. Orthodontia is expensive.

Two: fingers. Classic choice. When I'm asking for someone's digits it is almost never about their phone number.

One: this issue of The Omen. That's right every single one. All the copies. One by one. And I enjoyed every minute of it too.



An Incomplete List of the Items Found in
Apartment 711 at 4622 Cleburne Road, Dublin, VA,
24084 on January 3rd, 1996
compiled by Tony LaShit for Beatrice Vaffanculo*

by J. E. Cramer

Eighteen Blu-Ray copies of *Space Jam* (1996), four tissue boxes (all empty, all emblazoned with the image of a horse), a gallon container of Cholula hot sauce (half-empty), a twelve-ounce container of Tabasco hot sauce (three-quarters empty), dish detergent, laundry detergent, an 8 x 11-inch picture frame, a printed photograph of four people (believed to be author J. E. Cramer, film director Matteo JWHJ-0715₁, his wife Angela JWHJ-0715, and [REDACTED]), nine [REDACTED] the [REDACTED] ■ two Fuji apples (neither completely ripe), a wicker bushel basket of pink fiberglass insulation, paperback copy of *Ulysses* by James Joyce, paperback copy of [REDACTED]₂, hardback copy of *How to Clean Everything* by [REDACTED] paperback copy of *Dead Souls* by Nikolai Gogol, paperback copy of [REDACTED] by Anton Chekhov, [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED] pencils, pens, coins, pebbles, small glass jars, broomstick handle, fishing rod handle, hockey stick handle, small glass jar, test tube, screwdriver handle (Phillips), cigar, banana,

■ IMPORTANT

an empty but waterlogged packet of Newport cigarettes,

a cut-glass bowl containing ninety-five clear glass marbles, the shed skin of a black rat snake, a 1994 Word of the Day calendar, a 1995 Clothed Fireman of the Month calendar, a 1996 Clothed Paisley, Oregon Rotary Club Member of the Month calendar, a

"My [REDACTED] I'm nervous—this is by no means a mistake; it's something I've been completely certain of for two years now, but I'm nervous, really more for your sake than mine. [REDACTED] has it been any sort of a life for you? [REDACTED] but it displays a certain [REDACTED]

As I always have been and hope always to be, [REDACTED], twenty
spare roofing shingles, a [REDACTED], and a VCR tape of *Space Jam* (1996).

1. Matteo JWHJ-0715 directed the 1973 crime drama film *Goncharov* alongside Martin Scorsese, then was never heard from again—until now, it seems. He is suspected to have died of complications in 2004, but no reputable documentation of any aspect of JWHJ-0715's life exists, with the possible exception of an accident report concerning a green Subaru Ascent with the license plate JWHJ-0715 in St. Paul, Minnesota, in January 2021.

2. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**An Incomplete List of the Items Found in Apartment 711 at 4622 Cleburne Road, Dublin, VA, 24084 on January 3rd, 1996* is the second installment in “The Longest Time” by Billy Joel, an immersive work of fiction by J. E. Cramer.



CONTENT WARNINGS FOR THE FOLLOWING SUBMISSION: GRAPHIC DESCRIPTIONS, T-SLUR, F-SLUR, LANGUAGE SURROUNDING SEX & SEXUAL ASSAULT

The collected works of Juniper Balbus-Holmquist

by Juniper Balbus-Holmquist

Guitar

I am the self-seeking little thing that denies and loves peoples crazy little maggot brains in gasoline daydreams

am the tool of the gatekeeper AND the new girl AND all para-social buttsex and the urban moral decays in
mutilated heart eaten for breakfast lunch dinner

I am an agent of transvestite destruction, i am the weapon of the allmighty ruined and raped

I retire to long stirring streams of intensity and honesty and death and ruination and i make war my war my
Enemy of enemies of enemies

I am 6 strings and some dead trees but i am peace and suffering, love and hate, big bang, big crunches et al

The world is made for our communion— my stick-strings and your twig-thumbs

We exist in pathological denial and big drips and love erections and world-bending savagery and haha yea

This is our story we get to tell it, this is our story we get to fuck it, this is our story we get to scream it

Asus2/B-Em/B-Cmaj7-Cmaj9 is my progression of umbilical chords

And the stories weave through the pale moon ebony fretboard and bois de rose body and the Sophia 2:92 tremolo arm and 30" scale length— the bone nut, the Ron Ellis LRP pickups— all as i imagine in my mind

This item is an acoustic guitar— not a baritone— no tremolo- and no pickups

But yet it can be anything

It is a transgender instrument the guitar

It is pathologically queer and exploratory— it fucks its friends and crowdkill hipsters and lies and smokes weed

It can be anything— distortion on an acoustic— the microtonal bends suggesting sitar— downtuned on light strings smacka-smack making it sounds like a rubber bass-rubber band-rubberheart

The guitar is me this fat tranny faggot of a person— this pathologically ill and erupting traitor of my own heart

It can be anything but it is nothing— the most egoistic instrument— the cock of human musicking

It rides long waves of amorphous tranquility and fucks and dies and fucks the dead and fucks the died and dyed and dying and dyeing— lying to itself it cries and queers— it becomes chaos— it is death destroyer most all of connections— the world of {truly} fair un-ego



around the bend

By Clay Kesling

Step. Step. Step. Left the house not long ago.
With each step, nearing the bend ahead
It's getting late. It's getting dark. The night breeze is stirring in.
The street remains dormant. The houses are settling into sleep.
Reds-Oranges-Yellows. The leaves stir about on the ground and in the air.
They crinkle as feet go Step Step Step
It's not too safe to walk this late. On this street. Feet clanging on the concrete.
Making it around that bend would ensure safety.
Freedom. Security. Home even.
For on this street the houses sit quietly.
The breeze blows harsh and violent.
The people recluse in their homes.
The leaves just stir and stir and stir.
Oh. Oh. One can only hope to move along around that bend.
That would ensure a safe-steady end.
For on this street.
The children don't play.
The birds don't sing.
The dogs don't bark.
The colors don't shine.
It's ok. Arriving at that bend is imminent.
Can't help but be worried. Fear sorta creeps and stalks and.
In the road on this street.
The feet sink into the ground
Time slows way down
The houses are like the infested innards of an apple
Rotten. Wretched. Dark. Sickening.
Shadows envelop everything around
Things loom about
Thump. Thump. Thump. The pulsating heart within grows distinct.
Thump. Thump Thump.
Throat closing. Eyes watering. Muscles clenching. Pitted stomach.
AND BY GOD. The stench of death.
The crows call maniacally. The deep somber howling of wolves.
Stalker. Creep. Murderer. Monster. Living. Dead. Ghost.
But. It is no worry. For the bend is nearing.
Step Ste St S
But...my feet...they're stuck... in this dastardly concrete
Trapped. Alone. Sinking. Night. Bend in sight. Nobody to help.
For on this street. Around that bend. There is nothing...but a bitter end.





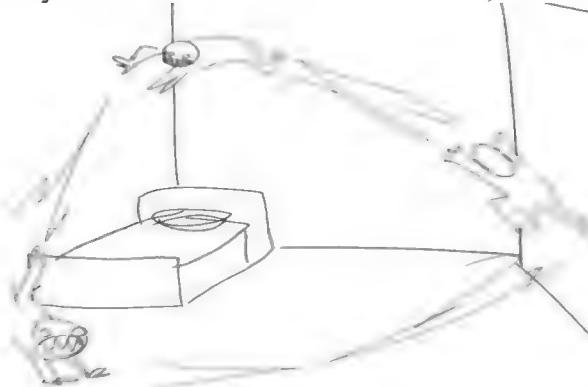
Section Nerd

“Saw X” more like “Saw SEX”
 (an unhinged movie review *spoiler free*)
 by Jordan Hughes



Saw fans we are so goddamn back!

So I'm a pretty big horror fanatic, if you bring up any sort of horror movie chances are I will be talking your ear off for at least a solid hour, you know *normal* person shit. And as a horror fan, the Saw series is definitely a favorite of mine, so naturally when I heard that a tenth installment of the series was being released this year and I watched the trailer for it, I was a lot like this:



I went to see Saw X on October 28th, and to prove how big of a Saw fan I am and how excited I was for this movie, I wore a prop reverse bear trap into the movie theater (I'm so normal you guys just don't understand). And in my completely unbiased opinion... this movie FUCKS! I honest to god think that even if you don't like the Saw series, you will love this movie (though some context from previous films might have the plot make more sense); and if you do like the Saw series, you're gonna fuckin' LOVE this movie. This movie has a perfect balance between a genuinely good story and script, and an absolutely gorgeous bloodbath.

The acting isn't usually something that you would take note of for a Saw movie but honestly, every single actor in this movie did an amazing job, the Saw veteran actors Tobin Bell (as Jigsaw) and Shawnee Smith (as Amanda) especially give a heartfelt performance. Speaking of which, it's so odd to watch a movie where you look at the stuff Jigsaw does and are like "You know this guy might have a point", but it really does work well in this movie; You feel real empathy for the "bad guys" of the franchise like Jigsaw who was scammed by false doctors who promised a cure for his terminal cancer, and Amanda who is always in dread for the day that Jigsaw, the only person who kinda gave her a reason in life, will inevitably die. It gives a different look to these characters who were designed to be inherently malicious, and it works, it truly does from a general film standpoint. The actual trap victims actually have depth to them instead of just being bags of meat going into a meat grinder. The main trap victim is Cecilia who is a raging bitch, but it's purposeful and it's great. You hate her so damn much and want her to die the most out of everyone, that you actually kinda like her. And there's also Gabriela who is complicit in Jigsaw getting scammed out of life saving treatment (which for clarification, is what everyone in the traps were involved in, hence why you're kinda rooting for Jigsaw the entire time) but you still kind of feel sympathy for her as well due to her being a drug addict and likely being taken advantage of in this scam. And you wouldn't be alone in feeling sympathy for her, as Amanda being an ex-drug addict herself does too. And gives us a super interesting character arc for Amanda where she has to wrestle with doing what she's told by Jigsaw, and helping out a person who she ultimately sees herself in. But enough about the genuinely good writing, let's talk about the absolutely NASTY traps. Every single trap in this movie is graphic and nasty, which if you hate gore might be a downside for you, but if you're a sick fuck like me who likes to see a practical dummy filled with latex and corn syrup get torn to shreds, you will have a blast! But as gross as the traps are, they also don't distract from the quality of the story, dialogue, etc. which is always great to see in a splatter/gore movie like Saw. But yeah, in an effort to not ramble on for far too long I'll leave it here; Saw X not only stands out as a good Saw movie, not only as a good horror movie, but honestly as an overall good movie, I cannot recommend it enough. And if you're squeamish and you want to see it, bring a friend, they'll likely have fun with your reactions as well as the movie.

And if for some reason you enjoy my silly movie opinions, feel free to follow my Letterboxed because I am not above having a letterboxed: [@Sleepy_Filmz](#)

And for now, I will see you next unhinged review.



**Do you want to
play a game?**



Devoting too little energy to writing about globally significant topics

by Lin Jiménez

The first thing

Project Voltage is a collaboration between Pokémon and Crypton, the company responsible for Hatsune Miku. A new Pokémon-themed song made by a vocaloid producer and sung by Miku comes out every Friday. The project was announced on August 31st, 2023 for Miku's 16th birthday/anniversary. The releases began on September 29th. So far, three songs have been released and only the first four producers are known. The rest is a mystery!! My favorite so far is Mitchie M's. I especially appreciate 2:03's use of both Roxie's voice and Champion Iris' theme.



Sep. 29th – Volt Tackle by DECO*27



Oct. 6th – Denki Yohou (by inabakumori)



Oct. 13th – What Kind of Future by Mitchie M

Commercial break: Do you like vocaloid, utaite, listening to great music, making pretty ok music, cool tech, sound design, anime, comics, free food, and/or other good things? If you do or do not, join Vocal Synthesis and Related Media on HampEngage. I created the registration request months and months ago and it's just been approved this month. Not joining is an admission of guilt. Also Recess Club... we'll be making a gigantic pile of leaves and then jumping into it on Sunday, October 22nd. There will be apple cider doughnuts and apple cider drink. In November, we'll watch the animated miniseries "Above the Garden Barrier"

The second thing

Ango Sakaguchi was born on October 20th, 1906. I like the things I've read about this person and the (translated) things I've read by him. I think he's pretty cool, so I will be celebrating his birthday as I always do by reading translated versions of his works and stuff about him. Maybe this year I will also bake cake. If you want some cake on October 20th, 2023, message me. (Naturally, I'll also listen to PinocchioP's Project Voltage entry on this day!!) Anyway, here are some free/online translations of his work and resources you can use to learn more about him:

Translated works:

1. [Discourse on Decadence](#), translated by Seiji Lippit
2. [Wind, Light, and the 20-year-old Me](#)
(Abridged Version), translated by Maplopo
Learn about him:

1. [Ango Sakaguchi Biographical Timeline](#),
Maplopo
2. <https://ango-museum.jp/> (Japanese only)
3. google.com

Nerd Weekend Submitted by Claire Bruso

NERD WEEKEND!!!!

LARP at Prescott Tavern

DEATHFEST

Where

Hampshire College
Prescott Tavern
October 21/2023
3:00 PM-8:00 PM

Theme

Fantasy

Event

Mayoral Election for
Mayor of Whitepool

THERE WILL BE PIZZA

Where

Hampshire College
Adele Simmons Hall
Main Lecture Hall
October 22/2023
1:00 PM-9:00 PM

FREE FOOD



Deathfest Season!

by Alex Franzoni

Hello World!

Two years ago one of the Signers of the Omen reached out to me and asked me to bring Deathfest (a ttrpg tournament that's been happening on and off at Hampshire since the early 2000's) back to life! Since then (S22) it's been happening every single semester, and this semester is no different. It's always a crazy fun time and I recommend anyone and everyone who's free that day (Oct 22nd 1pm @ASH) to show up. To give you all a taste of what Deathfest is typically like here are some people's favorite Deathfest memories:

“Receiving my tapeworm son whom I then sacrificed for my own survival”

“Baby detective being the only survivor of tier 1”

“A giant flesh orb of corpses going on a romantic candlelit date with its mom <3”

“The fusion dance performed between two clones of ed wingenbach forming the 4 armed 4 legged 2 headed ed^3”

“Pumpkin mad scientist trying to teach the plants class consciousness”

“Killing Ethan [Ludwig-Peery] by roasting him as a fornite kid”

We will have catering from Chipotle and there will be prizes/awards at the end. You don't need any experience, or to bring anything, just show up and prepare to die

Finally I'd like to give a huge thank you to: Ike, Sam, CC, Violet, Alix, Nicholas, FK, Tai, Micheal, and J for helping out this year, and an especially big thank you again to Ike and Violet who revamped/remade the deathfest system!

See you all there <33



editor's note: **NSFW Next Submission!!!**

NSFW

Punch-Out!! Characters and They're Penis Sizes

By Lu Koenigsberger and Zach Fischer

Disclaimer: This is not meant to shame anyone for the size of their penis. That's stupid. It's also not healthy or realistic to compare yourself to the hunk of a man that is Disco Kid. This is just meant to educate and inform the masses. Now behold, the truth you have all been too scared to acknowledge until now. Tremble before facts and logic, woke moralists.

Little Mac
5.5 inches

Really good at Fingerboarding



Glass Joe
8 inches

Can paint the Eiffel Tower in 5 minutes



Von Kaiser
6 inches

Got kicked out of a casino for being too good at poker



Disco Kid
10.5 inches

Can make a really good grilled cheese



King Hippo
???

Won The
Voice in 2013



Piston Hondo
7 inches

Won a
Yugioh
Tournament



Bear Hugger
7.5 inches

WR in
Plants vs
Zombies
NMG%
Speedrun
catagory



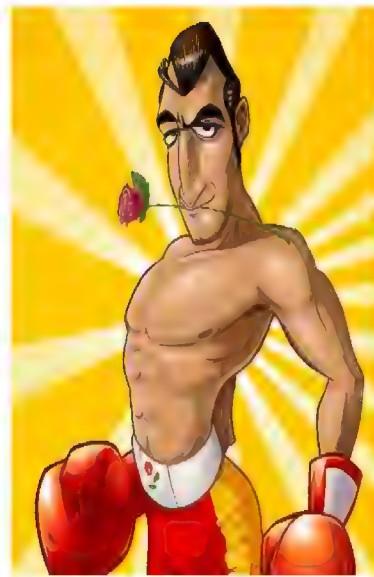
Great Tiger
6.5 inches

Has a
B.A. in
Communications



Don Flamenco
3.5 inches

CEO of
GarfieldEats



Aran Ryan
7.7 inches

Killed small
animals as
a child



Soda Popinski
5.5 inches
w/ SODA!!!
8 inches

LOVES
holographic j-pop
Singer
hatsune miku



Super Macho Man
8 inches, cut

Has a wife
and children
(SOMEHOW)



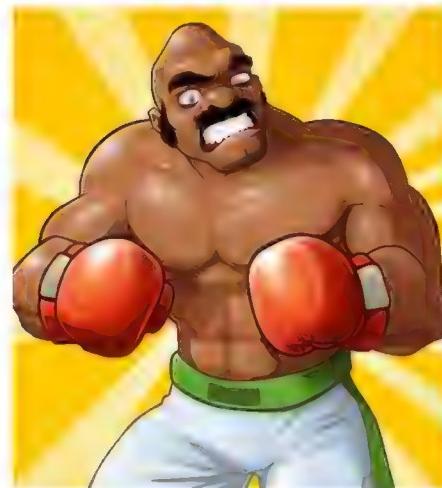
Doc Louis
4.5 inches

Ate chinese
Food one
Time



Bald Bull
8.5 inches, cut

Has climbed
mount everest
Naked



Mr. Sandman
10 inches

Good with kids,
babysits on
the side



Referee
9 inches

A retired olympic
curler, does this
job for fun





Donkey Kong
2.5 inches

Shot a man in
trader joes in 2014
while diddy kong
watched



ed
by Violet Gibson



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PENIS
BLAST

PENIS
BLAST

PENIS
BLAST

PENIS
BLAST

PENI
BLAS

PENIS
BLAST

PENIS
BLAST

PENIS
BLAST



Ok issue is ogre now

Chat

doinker_of_dinks: Is that as bald as they let you make em?

doinker_of_dinks: He's so youthful

evemaru: PENIS BLAST PENIS BLAST PENIS BLAST PENIS BLAST

violetinreal: why is the quality so bad??

Moog: he does have a little bit of hair

maxincubi: she's beautiful



doinker_of_dinks: I like to imagine this is his ideal self

maxincubi: his pure self

eaterofsoup: i am the shadow the ture ed

I_am_cold: why half-elf???

rats: a bard eh

rats: wow Ed has garbage stats

evemaru: Two small images showing a person in a dark suit and tie from different angles.

maxincubi: A small image showing a person in a dark suit and tie from a side-on angle.



rats is now following!